

VZCZCXRO3510  
OO RUEHDT RUEHPB  
DE RUEHJA #2032 3451004  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 111004Z DEC 09  
FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4113  
INFO RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS JAKARTA 002032

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, EAP/RSP  
NSC FOR D. WALTON

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [ID](#)  
SUBJECT: PARLIAMENTARY REFORM -- STRENGTHENING THE REGIONAL  
VOICE

REF: JAKARTA 1866 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. (U) This message is Sensitive but Unclassified. Please handle accordingly.

¶2. (SBU) SUMMARY: Indonesia's Regional Representatives Assembly (DPD), the country's legislative upper chamber or "Senate," is taking steps to bolster its credibility and power. The DPD, which was established in 2004, was designed to give Indonesia's diverse regions a more direct voice at the national level. It has fallen short of that goal because it lacks the authority to pass laws, among other items. It continues to press for a stronger voice for the regions as they gain influence under Indonesia's ongoing decentralization of powers program. USAID is currently providing support to the DPD as part of its program on improving regional governance. END SUMMARY.

INDONESIA'S "SENATE" STRUGGLING TO FORGE IDENTITY

¶3. (SBU) Indonesia created the Assembly of Regional Representatives (DPD) in 2004 as an 'upper house' which would function to bring the concerns of Indonesia's diverse regions to the national level. Like the U.S. Senate, it is representative but not proportional, and consists of four members from each of Indonesia's 33 provinces. DPD members consider themselves the purest representation of the people's interests because they are elected directly rather than as part of a party ticket. However, the DPD has little legislative power. Although it drafts and consults on legislation, only the House of Representatives (DPR) may pass legislation.

TRYING TO EXPAND POWERS

¶4. (SBU) DPD members have recently pressed to expand their powers. The DPD sued in the country's Constitutional Court for its members to be allowed to run for speaker of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR). (Note: In Indonesia's somewhat complex legislative system, the MPR consists of both the DPD and DPR and has its own, largely symbolic, leadership.) This backfired, because although the Court ruled that DPD members could be considered for Speaker, it also overturned legislation stipulating that two DPD members be assured MPR Deputy Speaker roles. As a result, only one DPD member became Deputy Speaker this session, while the coveted Speaker role went to a DPR member.

¶5. (SBU) The DPD has also pushed for a new constitutional amendment which would allow it to pass legislation (such acts would have to be reconciled on an equal basis with the DPR). Political party elites from every party, who are the backbone of Indonesia's political establishment, are unlikely to

support this proposal since they would gain little from a stronger and apolitical DPD. President Yudhoyono also seems unlikely to concede more legislative power to the DPD, as he has dismissed calls for constitutional revision in several recent public speeches.

#### USG ENGAGEMENT

¶6. (SBU) The DPD has also been lobbying internationally to augment its powers. In early December, Deputy Speaker Laode Ida invited the diplomatic community to a forum to discuss how the DPD could effectively engage internationally and make the DPD more useful as a legislative body during Indonesia's ongoing era of decentralization. The diplomats agreed to cooperate more closely with the DPD on ways to enhance the effectiveness of the body.

¶7. (SBU) While it is unclear how the DPD's role in Indonesia's legislature will evolve during its second term, more USG engagement with the DPD would bolster Indonesia's parliamentary reform efforts. Because the majority of DPD members are apolitical, they are not constrained by party considerations. Our cooperation with the DPD will give us more traction on regional policy issues such as resource management, anti-corruption and regional investment. USAID is currently providing limited support to the DPD as part of its program on improving regional governance.

HUME